



LAST RITES

Part IV of IV

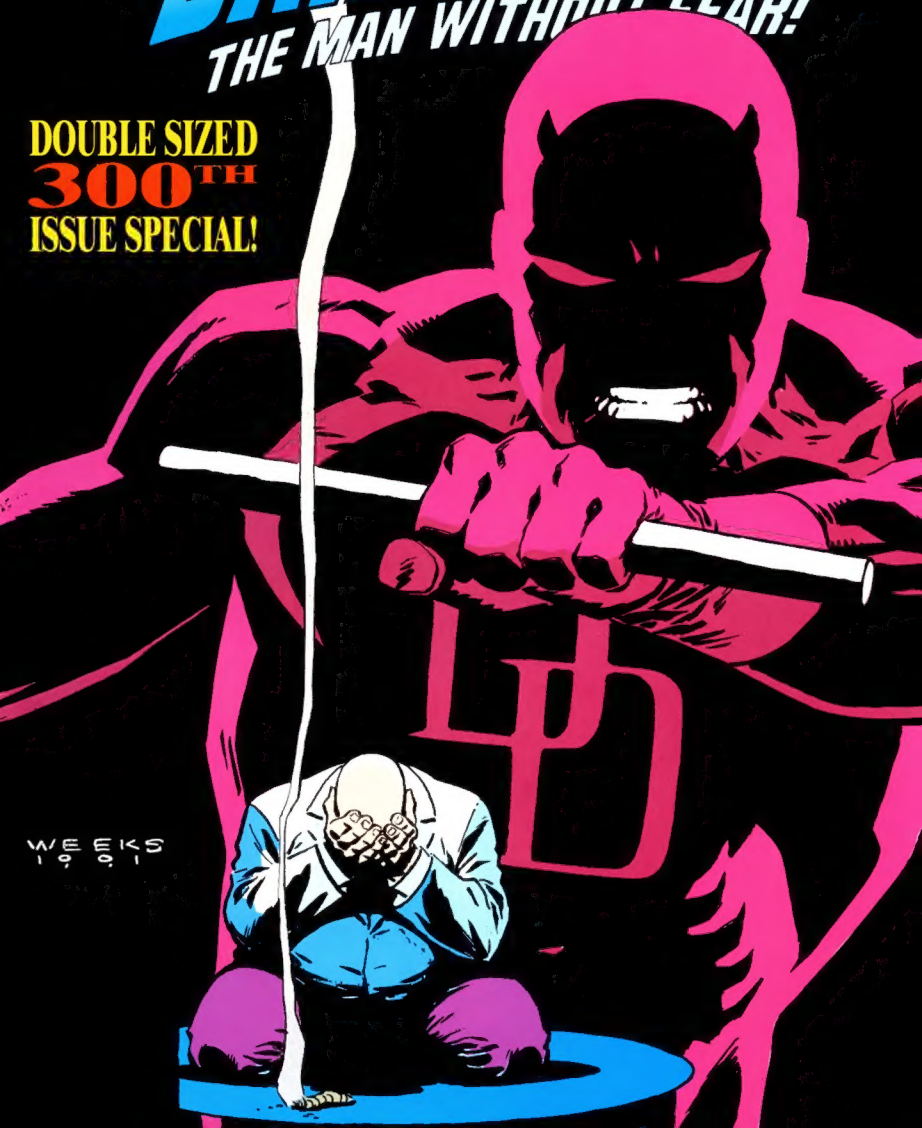
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JAN
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APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

DAREDEVIL

THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!

DOUBLE SIZED
300TH
ISSUE SPECIAL!

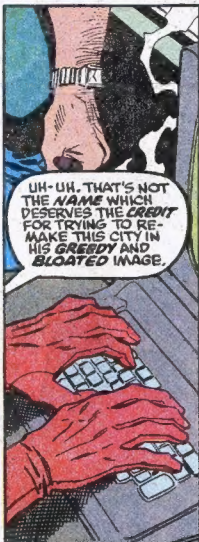
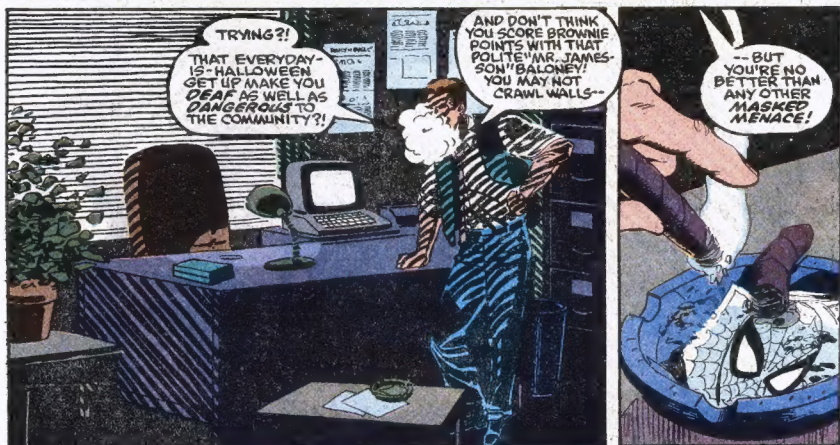


WEEKS
1-9-01

DAILY BUGLE

"MARCHING IN HERE, TELLING ME WHAT TO DO WITH MY NEWS-PAPER? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, YOU ARROGANT, SELF-RIGHTEOUS PIECE OF--"

"ARE YOU TRYING TO INSULT ME, MR. JAMESON?"



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A CHILDHOOD ACCIDENT STOLE HIS SIGHT, BUT, INCREDIBLY, IT ENDOWED YOUNG MATT MURDOCK WITH RADAR VISION AND HEIGHTENED SENSES. ARMED ONLY WITH HIS ATHLETIC PROWESS, BILLY CLUB, AND INDOMITABLE COURAGE, MATT BATTLES IN JUSTICE AS A CRIMSON-CLAD GLADIATOR!

Star
Log
Presents:

DAREDEVIL, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!

"History is littered with wars which everybody knew would never happen."

-- J. Enoch Powell

LET'S
GIVE THE
DEVIL HIS
DUE.

DAILY BUGLE
Kingpin to Face
Grand Jury

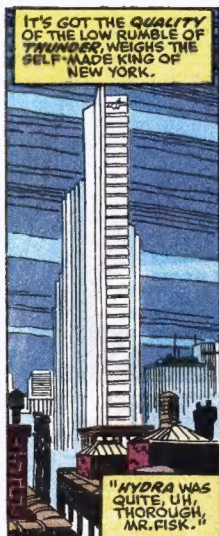
A reckoning in
four parts by

writer D.G. CHICHESTER
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chief

special thanks
MARK GRUENWALD
& BILL BATTLE

part 4

LONG LIVE THE KING



IT'S GOT THE QUALITY OF THE LOW RUMBLE OF THUNDER, WEIGHS THE SELF-MADE KING OF NEW YORK.

"HYDRA WAS QUITE, UH, THOROUGH, MR. FISK."



THE THICK PLASTIC FLAPPING HEAVY IN THE COLD BREEZE HIGH OVER MY CITY.

STILL MY CITY.

"WHILE FISK PLAZA REMAINS RELATIVELY UNSCATHED--AHEN! ASIDE FROM THE GUNSHIP DAMAGE, OF COURSE--"



THUNDER...ANNOUNCING A STORM...

--YOUR OTHER HOLDINGS WERE LESS...FORTUNATE, AFTER-HOUR CASINOS, BROTHELS, NARCOTICS LABS, EVEN YOUR LEGITIMATE SPICE WAREHOUSES...

...THOSE ARE ONLY THE MANHATTAN PROPERTIES THERE, WE'RE STILL WAITING ON PHOTOS FROM THE OTHER BOROUGHS.



WAITING, MALTESE, WAITING! I'M SICK TO DEATH OF WAITING!

WHY DO I HAVE INDUSTRIAL PLASTIC IN MY OFFICE WHEN WE CONTROL THIS CITY'S WINDOW BUSINESS?!

WE RUN CONSTRUCTION, BUT IT'S NOT SALVAGE COMPANIES AT WORK ON MY BUILDINGS--IT'S LOOTERS!



YOU'RE--WE'RE SUFFERING A BACKLASH FROM THE HYDRA TERRORIST'S ANARCHY.

TALK ON THE STREET OF THEM MANIPULATING THE ORGANIZATION UNDERMINED YOUR POWER FIGURATIVELY...THEIR STRIKE FORCES HAVE DONE IT LITERALLY.

CITY	AMOUNT
NEW YORK	00.00
BRAZIL	00.00
LONDON	00.00
PANAMA CITY	00.00
BCCI	00.00

FINANCES ARE ALSO SUFFERING FROM THE EFFICIENCY OF THEIR COMPUTER HACKERS...WE CAN MAYBE RECOVER THE SMALLER ACCOUNTS, BUT THAT'S GOING TO TAKE TIME...

MY BLINDS GONE, NOTHING
TO HIDE ME FROM PEERING
EYES AS I LOOK OUT OVER
MY DOMAIN.

REPLACED NOW BY THIS
MURKY SHEET, NOTHING
CLEAR THROUGH ITS CLOUDY,
DISTORTING SURFACE, BE
IT MY CITY OR MY--

NOTHING
IS CLEAR.

NOTHING.

WHAT ALL THIS MEANS
IS YOU'VE GOT A CRIMINAL
ELEMENT ADOPTING A
"WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE--

CARRION WAIT-
ING TO FEED.

--UH, RIGHT--

--AND THE POLITICIANS
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT
ON OUR PAYROLL ARE
EQUALLY HESITANT--

AFRAID
I'M NOW TOO
"HOT TO THE
TOUCH."

--AS
YOU
SAY--

--AND YOUR...
OUR... MONETARY
DIFFICULTIES HAVE
LEFT US UNABLE
TO SWEETEN THE
DEAL WITH EITHER
FACTION.

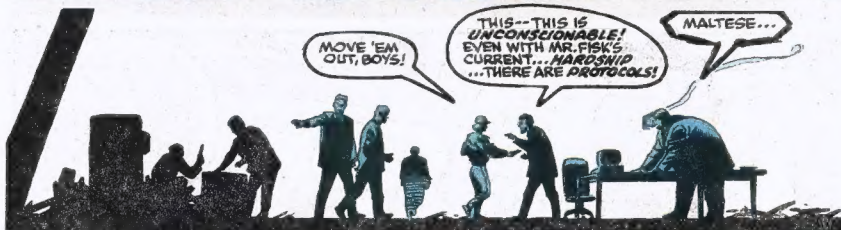
ALL TOLD, BOTH SIDES
ARE AFRAID OF GETTING
THEIR HANDS DIRTY.

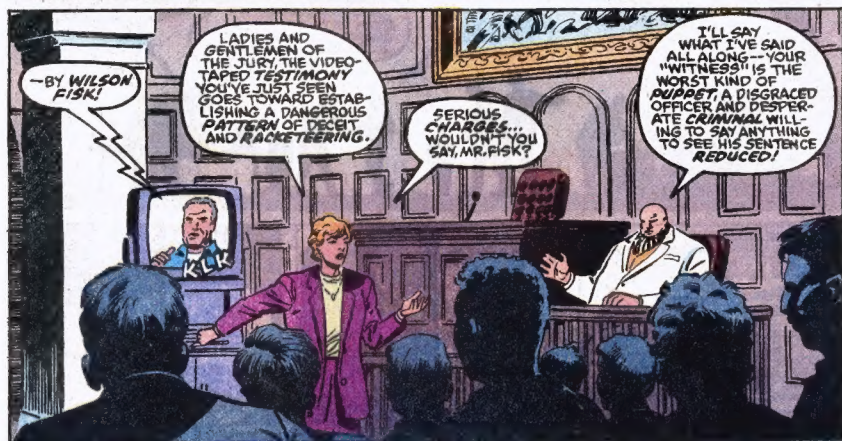
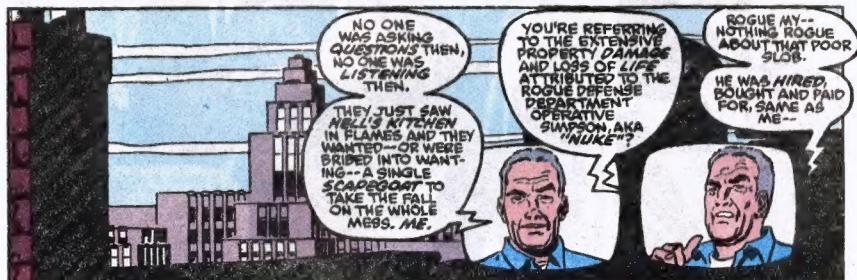
THAT'S RICH--THE
LEGAL AND ILLEGAL
CORRUPT, AFRAID
OF GETTING THEIR
HANDS DIRTY!

I REMEMBER A TIME
WHEN A LITTLE BLOOD
ON A MAN'S HANDS...



... WAS A
MARK OF
SUCCESS...







AS I'VE EXPLAINED BEFORE--SIR--LEGAL COUNSEL IS NOT PART OF THE GRAND JURY PROCESS.

WHAT A GRAND JURY DOES PROVIDE FOR ARE EXTRAORDINARY PROSECUTORIAL POWERS IN ORDER TO SEE IF A CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED.



IT MAY NOT BE TO YOUR LIKING, BUT I'D HARDLY QUANTIFY IT AS AN "INQUISITION".

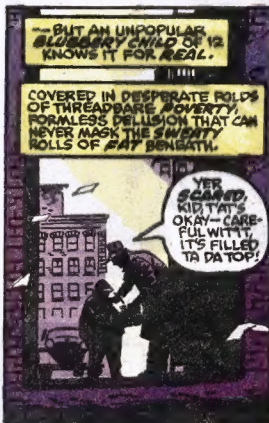
UNLESS YOU SEE A TORTURE RACK THE REST OF US DON'T? A BURNING AT THE STAKE?



OR MAYBE IT'S JUST YOU'RE NOT USED TO FEELING THE HEAT, MR. FISK...

SHE SPEAKS OF HEAT IN THE ABSTRACT. MULLS THE SELF MADE KING OF NEW YORK--

--MADE ON THE BACKS OF COUNTLESS OTHERS--



--BUT AN UNPOPULAR **BLUESBERRY** CHILD OF 12 KNOWS IT FOR REAL.

COVERED IN DESPERATE ROLDS OF THREADBARE **POVERTY**, FORMLESS DELUSION THAT CAN NEVER MASK THE **SWEATY** ROLLS OF **FAT** BENEATH.

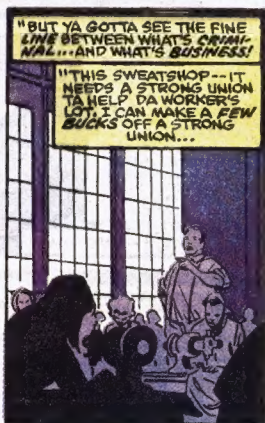
YER SCARED, KID? TAT'S OKAY--CAREFUL WITTT, IT'S FILLED TA DATOP!



THE CITY HOLDS ITS **HEAT** IN THE CONCRETE OF ITS BUILDINGS, THE TAR AND COBBLESTONE OF ITS STREETS.

PRESSURE GROWING WITH EVERY **RISE** IN THE **DEGREE**...

I KNOW WHATCHA THINKIN', WILLIE--TAT IT'S **WRONG**, DIS T'ING.



"BUT YA GOTTA SEE THE FINE **LINE** BETWEEN WHAT'S **CRIMINAL**...AND WHAT'S **BUSINESS**!"

"THIS SWEATSHOP--IT NEEDS A STRONG UNION TA HELP DA WORKER'S LOT. I CAN MAKE A FEW **BUCKS** OFF A STRONG UNION..."



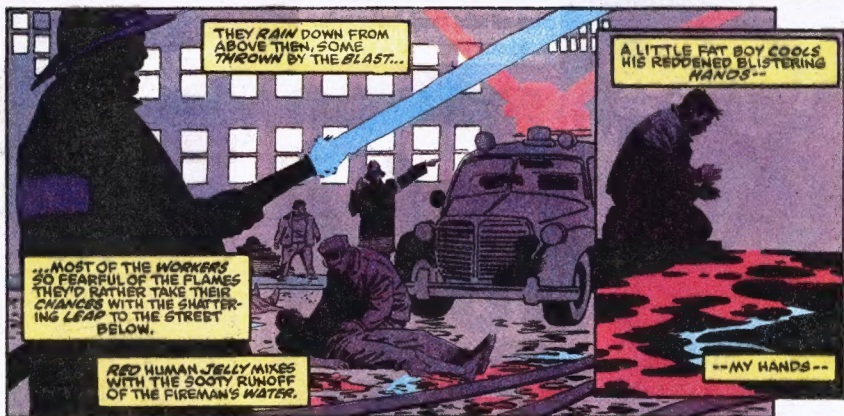
"...AN'YA CAN MAKE A FEW **BUCKS** PER YA YA AN'YESS BY HELPIN' ME **KNOW** THE **NEED** PER THAT UNION.

"YA WATCH OUT PER DA WORKERS AGAINST YINON, ACCIDENTS..."





SOMETHING
DOES.



THEY RAIN DOWN FROM
ABOVE THEN, SOME
THROWN BY THE BLAST...

A LITTLE FAT BOY COOLS
HIS REDDENED BLISTERING
HANDS--

...MOST OF THE WORKERS
SO FEARFUL OF THE FLAMES
THEY'D RATHER TAKE THEIR
CHANCES WITH THE SHATTER-
ING LEAD TO THE STREET
BELOW.

RED HUMAN JELLY MIXES
WITH THE SOOTY RUNOFF
OF THE FIREMAN'S WATER.

--MY HANDS--



--IN THE TEPID RIVER
THAT FLOWS INTO THE
GUTTER.

GETTING MY
HANDS DIRTY.



A LITTLE BLOOD ON
A MAN'S HANDS.

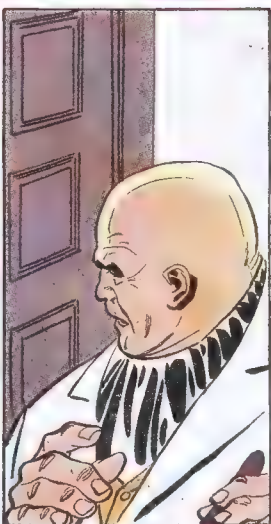
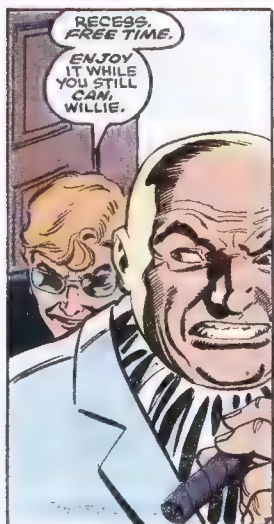
D-DID IT...
FOR MOM
AN' DAD AN'
US...

A MARK OF
SUCCESS.

I MAKE 15
DOLLARS
THAT DAY.

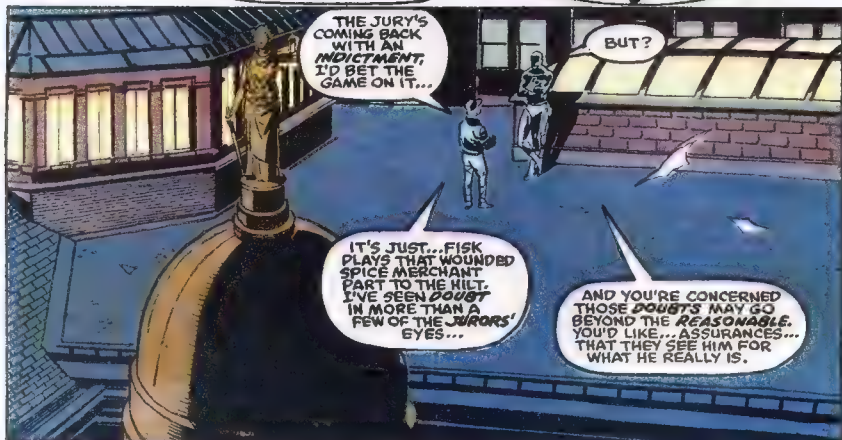


"MR. FISK?
MR. FISK?"



--CONCLUDING ANOTHER DAY OF GRUELING QUESTIONING FOR REPUTED RACKETEER WILSON FISK BY U.S. DISTRICT ATTORNEY KATHY MALPER.

IN RELATED NEWS, THE F.C.C. TOOK STEPS TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND FISK'S BROADCAST LICENSES AS QUESTIONABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES COME UNDER INVESTIGATION--

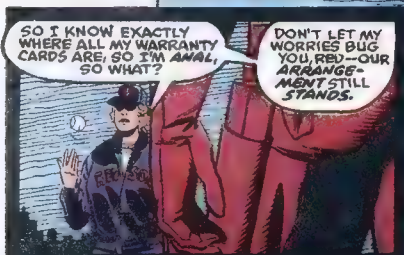


THE JURY'S COMING BACK WITH AN INDICTMENT, I'D BET THE GAME ON IT...

BUT?

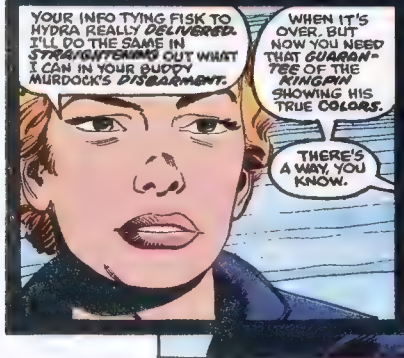
IT'S JUST...FISK PLAYS THAT WOUNDED SPICE MERCHANT PART TO THE HILT. I'VE SEEN DOUBT IN MORE THAN A FEW OF THE JURORS' EYES...

AND YOU'RE CONCERNED THOSE DOUBTS MAY GO BEYOND THE REASONABLE. YOU'D LIKE...ASSURANCES... THAT THEY SEE HIM FOR WHAT HE REALLY IS.



SO I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE ALL MY WARRANTY CARDS ARE, SO I'M ANAL, SO WHAT?

DON'T LET MY WORRIES BUG YOU, RED--OUR ARRANGEMENT STILL STANDS.



YOUR INFO TYING FISK TO HYDRA REALLY DELIVERED. I'LL DO THE SAME IN STRAIGHTENING OUT WHAT I CAN IN YOUR BUDDY MURDOCK'S DISARMMENT.

WHEN IT'S OVER, BUT NOW YOU NEED THAT GUARANTEE OF THE KINGPIN SHOWING HIS TRUE COLORS.

THERE'S A WAY, YOU KNOW.



HERE'S THE DEAL...

DO TELL?

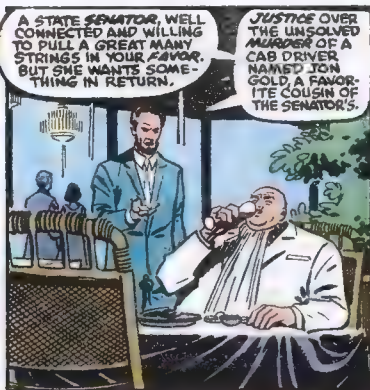
"WHERE ARE THEY, MALPESSE? MY HIGH-PRICED LAWYERS?"

"RELUCTANT TO REPRESENT YOU, MR. FISK... NOW THAT YOU CAN NO LONGER PAY THEIR HIGH PRICES."



"WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, MALTESE?"

"ALLIES ARE HARD TO COME BY AT THIS TIME, MR. FISK... BUT THERE'S WORD OF ONE."

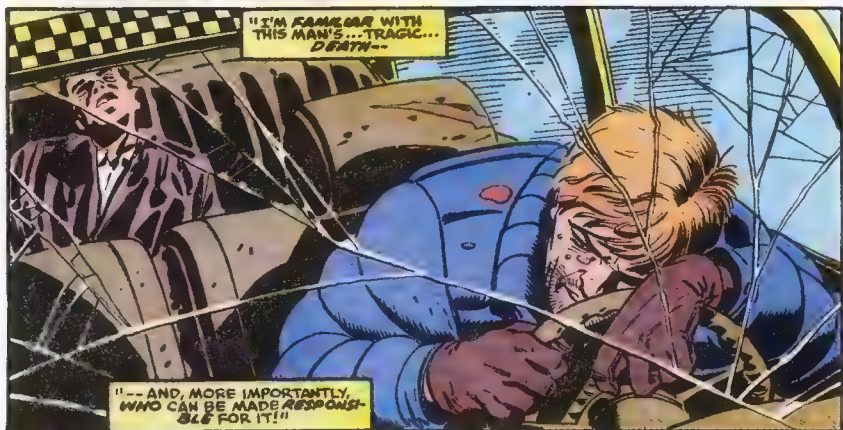


A STATE SENATOR, WELL CONNECTED AND WILLING TO PULL A GREAT MANY STRINGS IN YOUR FAVOR. BUT SHE WANTS SOMETHING IN RETURN.

JUSTICE OVER THE UNSOLVED MURDER OF A CAB DRIVER NAMED JON GOLD, A FAVORITE COUSIN OF THE SENATOR'S.



A CABMAN NAMED...



"I'M FAMILIAR WITH THIS MAN'S... TRAGIC... DEATH..."

"--AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHO CAN BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT!!"

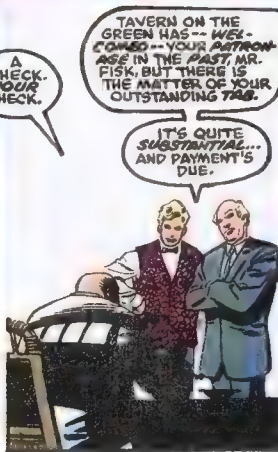


TELL THIS SENATOR SHE HAS MY FULL--

I'LL JUST TAKE THAT WHEN YOU'RE READY, SIR.

A CHECK. YOUR CHECK.

--HAM? WHAT'S THIS?



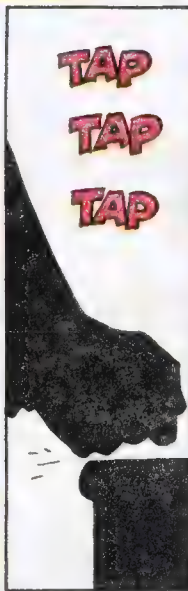
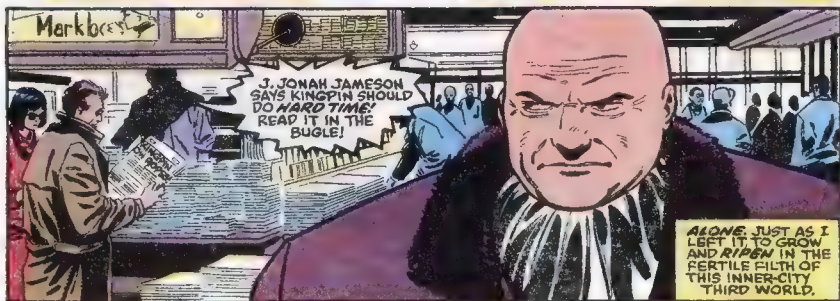
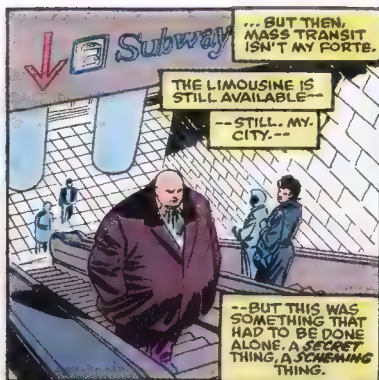
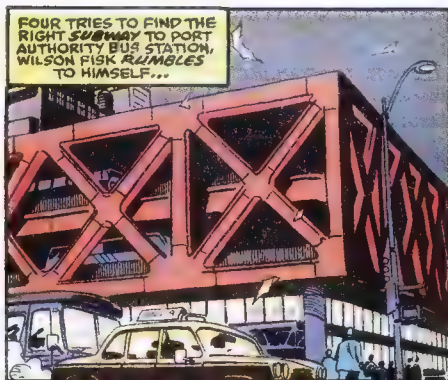
TAVERN ON THE GREEN HAS-- WE'VE COMED-- YOUR PATRONAGE IN THE PAST, MR. FISK, BUT THERE IS THE MATTER OF YOUR OUTSTANDING TAB.

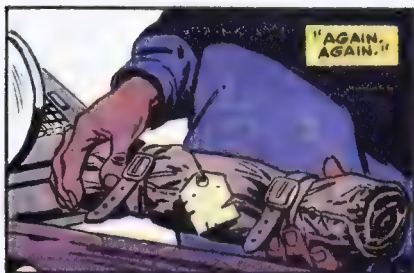
IT'S QUITE SUBSTANTIAL... AND PAYMENT'S DUE.



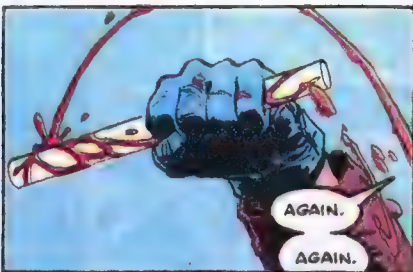
YES, PAYMENTS DUE...

...AND THEN SOME...





"AGAIN.
AGAIN."



AGAIN.

AGAIN.



AGAIN.

AGAIN.

AGAIN.



WHO'S THE
HACK?

AGAIN.

AGAIN.

AGAIN.

WHO WAS THE
HACK, YOU MEAN.
GOLD SOMETHIN'.
WENT FOR THE
WRONG FARE--
HIS TOUGH
LUCK.

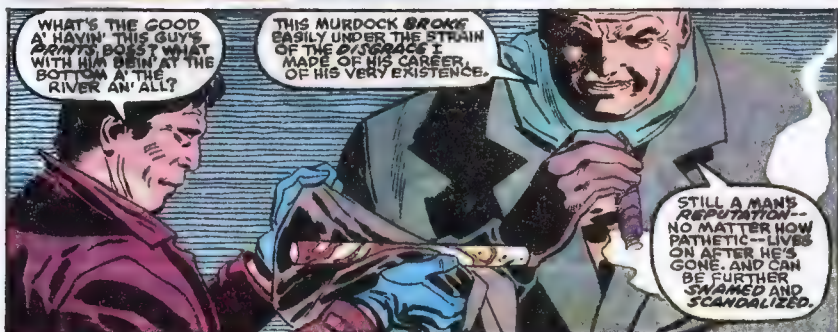
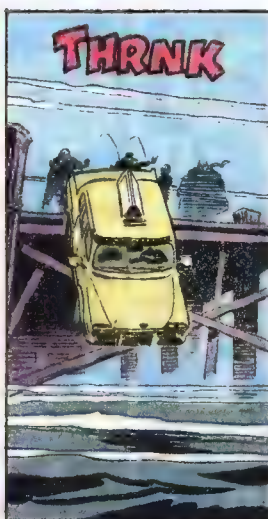
WHAT'S THIS
GUY MURDOCK'S
STORY?

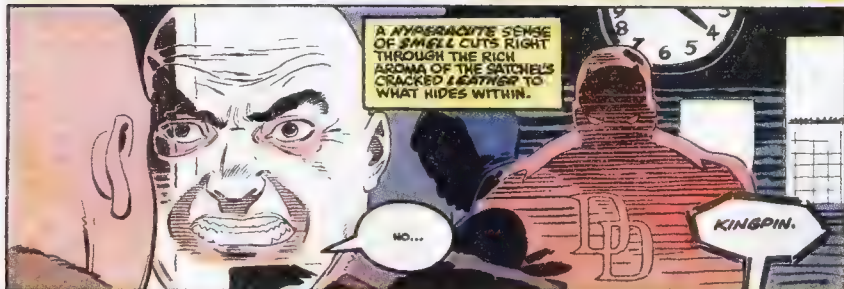
GOT ON THE
BOSS' BAD SIDE,
I GUESS. WHAT
MORE DO YA
NEED TA KNOW?

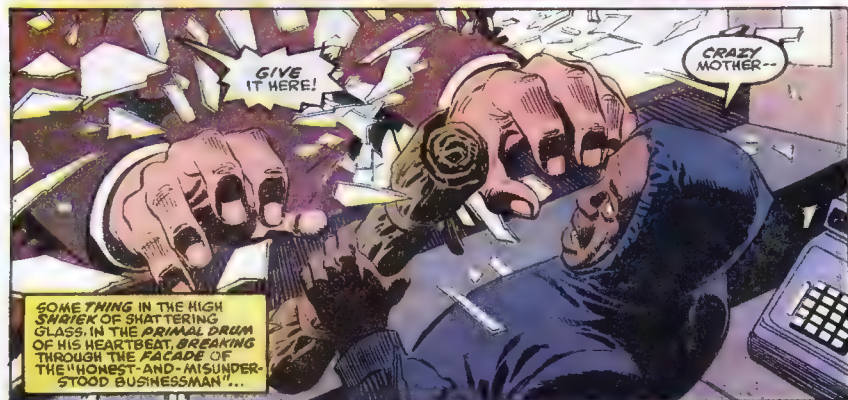
ENOUGH.
MAKE WHAT'S
LEFT OF MR.
GOLD COMFORT-
ABLE IN THE
BACK SEAT.

BE CER-
TAIN, MR.
MURDOCK'S
FINGER-
PRINTS ARE
CLEARLY
MARKED ON
THE BILLY
CLUB.

GOTCHA,
MR. FISK.





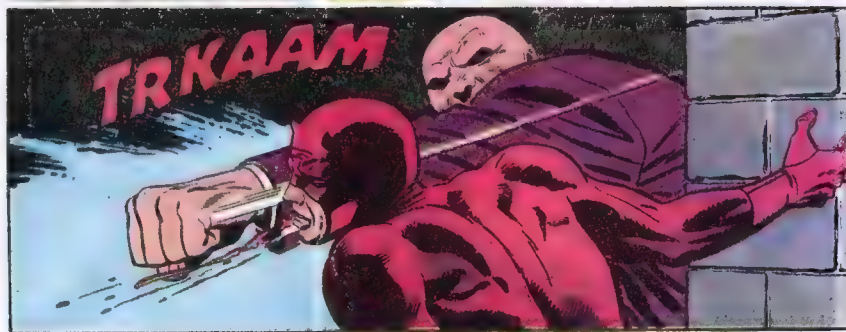


...AN ANIMAL ON
THE LOOSE

I'VE!
DONE!
NOTHING!
WRONG!

THRAAK

A comic book panel depicting a physical confrontation. On the left, a balding man with a stern expression, wearing a dark purple suit and a white shirt with a dark tie, is captured mid-swing with a large, dark mallet. He is leaning forward, his body angled towards the right. On the right, a man in a bright red, form-fitting suit with a large black 'S' emblem on the chest is recoiling from the impact. His mouth is wide open in a scream, and his eyes are squeezed shut. The background is dark and textured with black and white brushstrokes, suggesting a night scene or a dark, industrial environment. In the top left corner, a small yellow rectangular box contains the text "...AN ANIMAL ON THE LOOSE". A jagged speech bubble from the man in the purple suit contains the text "I'VE! DONE! NOTHING! WRONG!". Large, bold, red letters with a black outline spell out "THRAAK" above the man in the red suit, indicating the sound of the blow.



CAUGHT OFF-GUARD—
MY OWN FAULT.



HYPERACUTE SENSE
OF SMELL OVERWHELMED
BY THE OPEN AIR TOILET
ALL AROUND--

--HEAD STILL REEL-
ING FROM THE SHOT
I LET FISK HAVE
EARLIER TO GET
THINGS STARTED--

--I'M LUCKY HE ONLY
GOT OFF ONE CORNER
AROUND THAT CORNER.

RUMBLING ENGINES
FILL MY EARS, ECHOING
OFF THE STEEL AND
CONCRETE OF PORT'S
BOARDING LEVEL...

EXHAUST
FUME STINK
GAGGING MY
NOSE AND
MOUTH.

SENSES AFFLICTED,
I TAKE IT SLOW IN
TRACKING...

...LETTING MY RADAR SPREAD
ITS WAY ACROSS THE PLATFORM
AND BUSES, WAITING FOR IT TO
REFLECT BACK ONE ALL TOO
FAMILIAR SHAPE.

COME OUT,
COME OUT,
WHEREVER
YOU ARE...

GO AWAY,
DAREDEVIL...

...I'VE MADE
A DEAL THAT'S
TAKEN CARE OF
EVERYTHING...
THAT'S GOING TO
MAKE YOU AND
ALL MY OTHER
TROUBLES
JUST...

...GO
AWAY...

SOUNDS
LIKE SOME
DEAL!

IN FACT,
IT SOUNDS
A LOT LIKE
THE ONE I
HAD THE
SYSTEM
REED TO
YOU!





SOMEWHERE CLOSE, THE SCRAPE-JINGLE OF A KEY TURNING. A WHIFF OF GUN OIL AS CANNON PLUSS FIRE.



VERTEBRAE TWIST, BONE SCRAPING BONE, NIGHTMARE PAIN RACING ALONG MY SPINE.

WHUMP
WHUMP



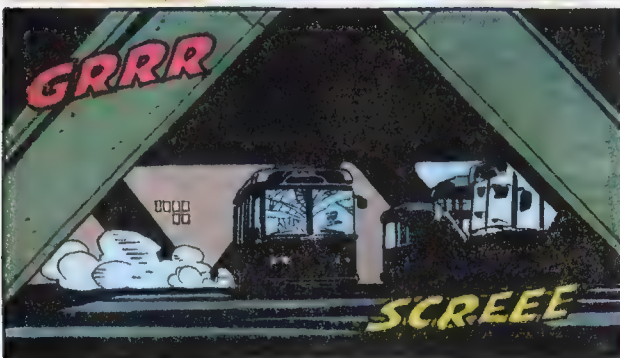
SCREE



FLESH AND MUSCLE THICK AND STRONG AS A TREE STUMP COLLIDES WITH MY RIBS--

--AGAIN, AGAIN--

-- AIR WHISTLING OUT HOT-WET THROUGH GRITTED TEETH.



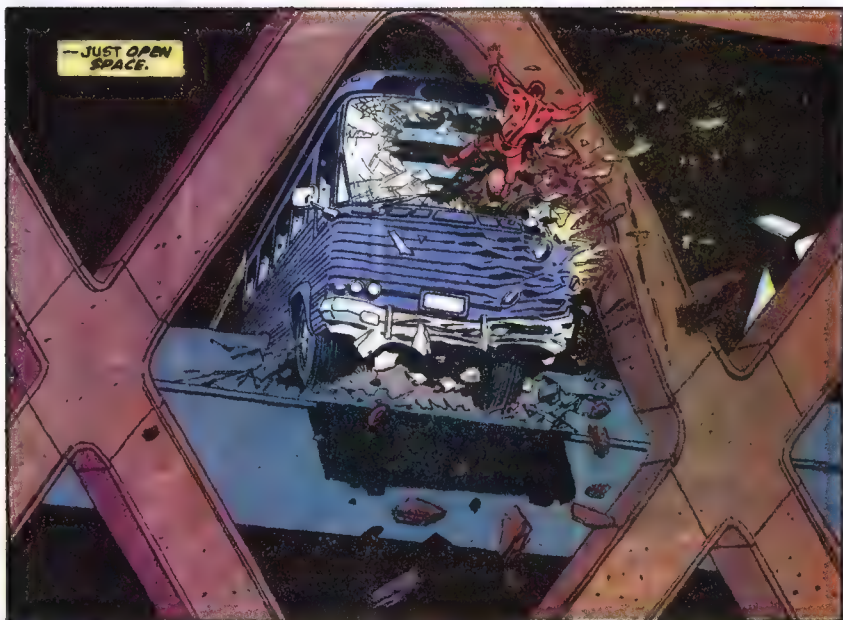
SCREE



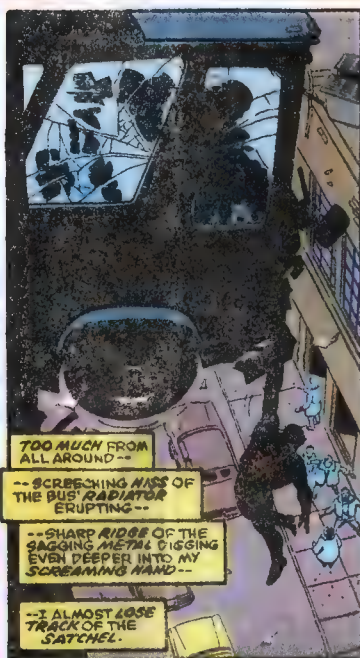
FROM BEHIND, A SUDDENLY EMPTY RADAR IMPRESSION.

NOTHING THERE, NO FORM, NO IMAGE--

WHUMP
WHUMP



METAL ANGLES DOWN,
THE EDGE OF THE
BUMPER LIKE A RAZOR
ALONG MY HYPERSENSI-
TIVE FINGERS.

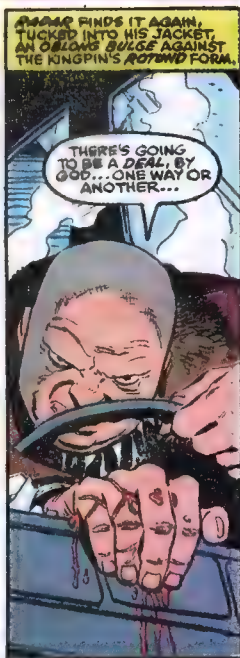


TOO MUCH FROM
ALL AROUND--

-- SCREECHING WAIL OF
THE BUS' RADIATOR
ERUPTING--

-- SHARP RIDGE OF THE
SAGGING METAL DIGGING
EVEN DEEPER INTO MY
SCREAMING HAND--

-- I ALMOST LOSE
TRACK OF THE
SATCHEL.



RAMMO FINDS IT AGAIN,
TUCKED INTO HIS JACKET,
ON OBVIOUS BULGE AGAINST
THE KINGPIN'S ROTUND FORM.

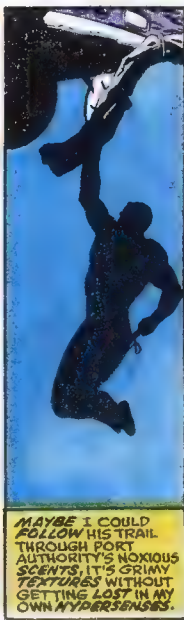
THERE'S GOING
TO BE A DEAL, BY
GOD... ONE WAY OR
ANOTHER...



HIS TEETH GRIND AS THEY CLENCH TOGETHER, METAL AND BROKEN STONE GRATE AS THE BUS SHIFTS HARD UNDER HIS WEIGHT.



MAYBE I COULD MAKE MY WAY THE SAME AS RISK BEFORE THE FRONT END GIVES WAY.



MAYBE I COULD FOLLOW HIS TRAIL THROUGH PORT AUTHORITY'S NOXIOUS SCENTS, IT'S GRIMY TEXTURES WITHOUT GETTING LOST IN MY OWN HYPERSENSSES.



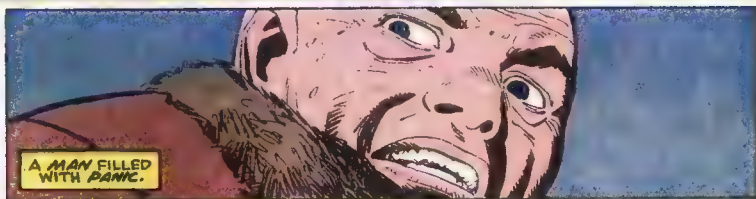
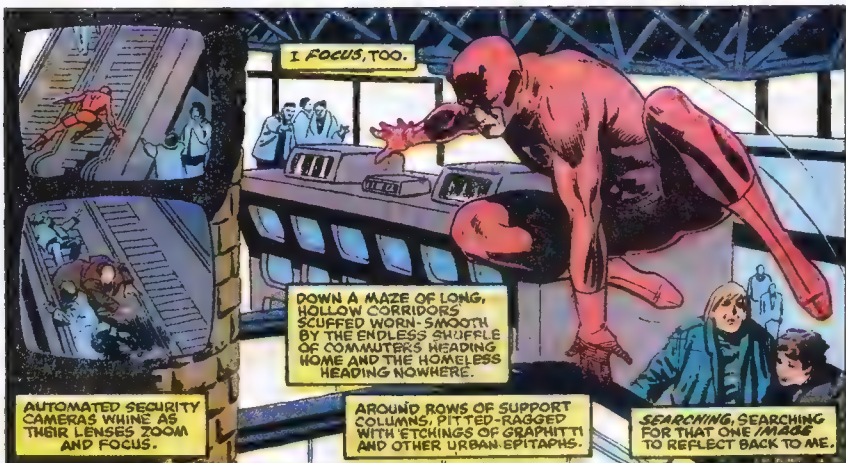
MAYBE I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA.




NO MORE CATCH-UP...



...TIME FOR THE CUT-OFF!

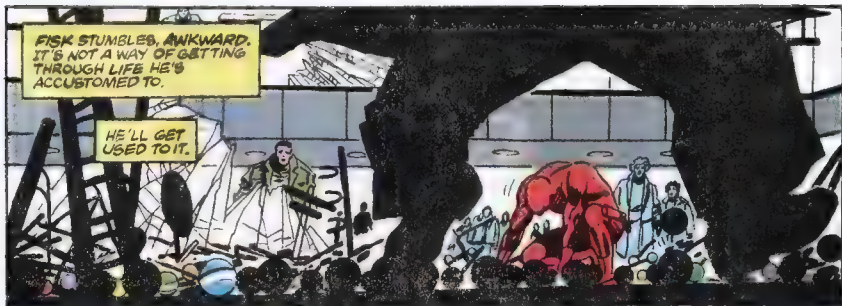




BENEATH US, THE
KINETIC MOTION
SCULPTURE
SHATTERING.

POOL BALLS THAT ONCE TRAVELED
UP AND DOWN ON RUBEN GOLDBERG-
LIKE ELEVATORS NOW BREAK
LATERALLY.

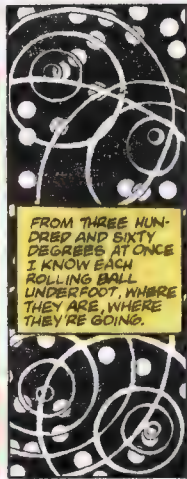
BELLS THAT ONCE JINGLED A
LYRICAL TUNE AS THE BALLS
MOVED ALONG CORKSCREW
TRACKS NOW CLATTER ACROSS
THE FLOOR, THEIR CLAPPERS
TOLLING ANOTHER, DARKER MUSIC.



HE MUMBLES SOMETHING ABOUT SENATORS AND COUSINS AND MAKING DEALS.



IF IT WERE ANYONE ELSE, I MIGHT EVEN FEEL PITY.

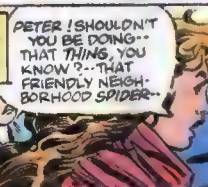
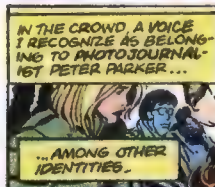


FROM THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY DEGREES AT ONCE I KNOW EACH ROLLING BALL UNDERFOOT, WHERE THEY ARE, WHERE THEY'RE GOING.

WHILE THE KINGPIN LURCHES AMONG THE DEBRIS, STAGGERING--



--I DANCE.



PETER! SHOULDN'T YOU BE DOING-- THAT THING, YOU KNOW?--THAT FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER--

S'OKAY, MARY JANE--THE MAN'S GOT IT UNDER CONTROL!

NOW GIVE 'EM ONE FOR ME, HORN-HEAD!

THE CLICK-WHIRR OF HIS CAMERA AS IT TAKES A PICTURE OF THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

...AMONG OTHER IDENTITIES.

FISKE'S HEARTBEAT RACES WITH CONFUSION--A "KING" WHO'S FORGOTTEN HIS KINGDOM.

"PEDESTRIANS AHEAD"

15-3

WHICH--
WHICH
WAY--?



IT'S MORE NOW THAN
JUST A MATTER OF NOT
BEING FAMILAR WITH
FORTY-FIRST STREET
OR THE WEST SIDE OR
MIDTOWN.



IT'S ABOUT
BEING LOST.



--SEE I'M ABOVE
WHAT THEY'D PUT
ME THROUGH!

PIS ONE,
CHUCKSTER.
WHAT'S HE
DOIN' ?!

DON'T
POINT, FOOL!
CAN'T YOU SEE HIS
EYES ? HE GOT
THEM WILD EYES!





WE BOTH OBSESS.

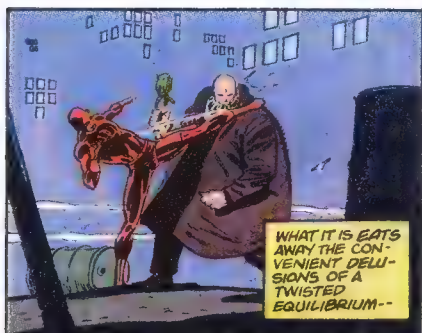
HIM, DESPERATE THAT A SET OF FAKED FINGER-PRINTS CAN LEAD TO SALVATION.

MYSELF, ANXIOUS THAT HE COULD ACTUALLY MISUSE THEM TO DRAG MY LIFE THROUGH THE BUTTER ONCE AGAIN.

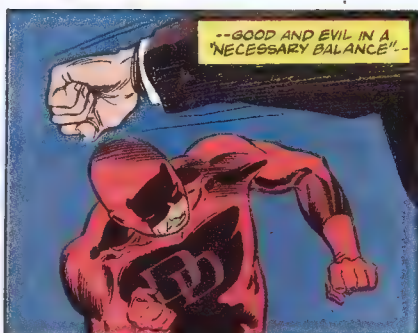


IT'S NO PIECE OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE THAT FUELS THIS CONFLICT--NOTHING THAT TANGIBLE COULD DRIVE US TO CIRCLE EACH OTHER ALL THESE YEARS.





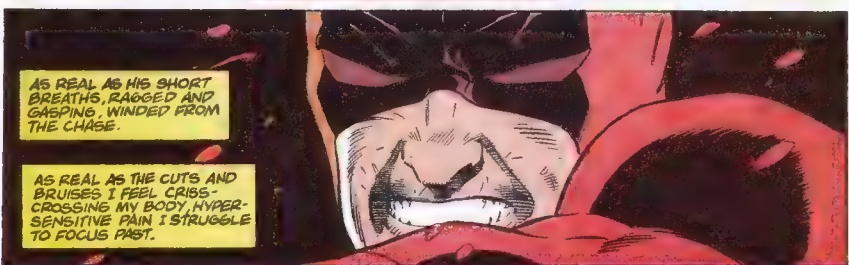
WHAT IT IS EATS
AWAY THE CON-
VENIENT DELU-
SIONS OF A
TWISTED
EQUILIBRIUM--



--GOOD AND EVIL IN A
'NECESSARY BALANCE'--

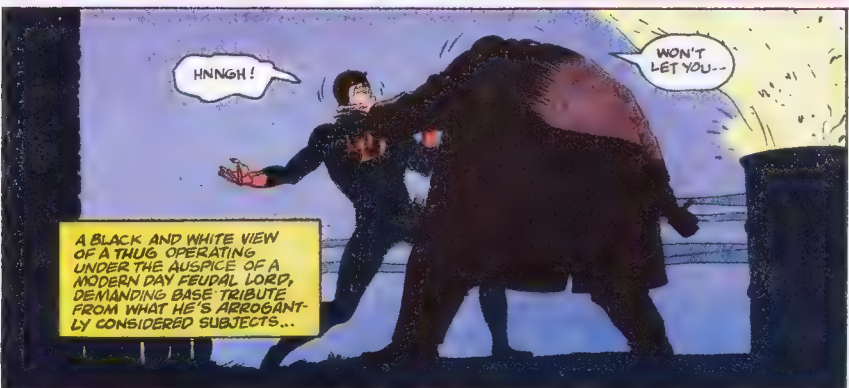


--AND LEAVES THE
WAY CLEAR FOR THE
HARSH REALITY.



AS REAL AS HIS SHORT
BREATHS, RAGGED AND
GASPING, WINDED FROM
THE CHASE.

AS REAL AS THE CUTS AND
BRUISES I FEEL CRIBB-
CROSSING MY BODY, HYPER-
SENSITIVE PAIN I STRUGGLE
TO FOCUS PAST.



HNNGH!

WON'T
LET YOU--

A BLACK AND WHITE VIEW
OF A THUG OPERATING
UNDER THE AUSPICE OF A
MODERN DAY FEUDAL LORD,
DEMANDING BASE TRIBUTE
FROM WHAT HE'S ARROGANT-
LY CONSIDERED SUBJECTS...

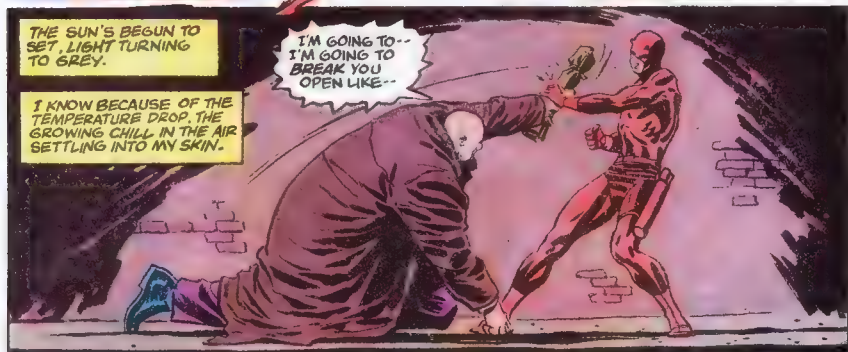
... AND THE ESSENTIAL NEED FOR
A CRUSADE IN THE NAME OF
THOSE WRONGED MEN AND WOMEN,
FORCED TO LIVE TOO LONG IN HIS
HUNGRY SHADOW.



THE SUN'S BEGUN TO
SET, LIGHT TURNING
TO GREY.

I KNOW BECAUSE OF THE
TEMPERATURE DROP THE
GROWING CHILL IN THE AIR
SETTLING INTO MY SKIN.

I'M GOING TO--
I'M GOING TO
BREAK YOU
OPEN LIKE--

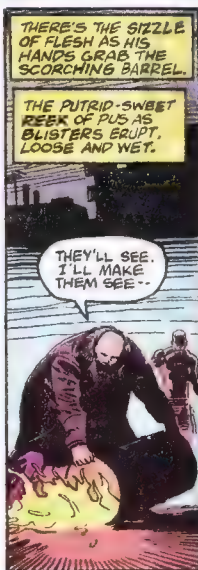




YOU'VE--
YOU'VE NO
RIGHT TO--!



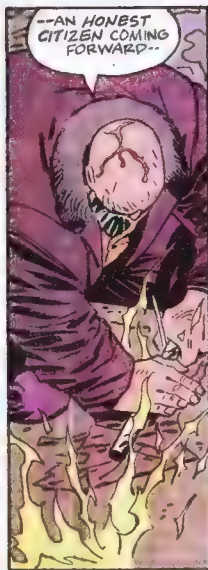
I SMELL LEATHER
AND WOOD BURN-
ING. RICH AROMA
QUICKLY TURNING
POLLUTED, ACRID
AS THE FLAMES
HAVE THEIR WAY.



THERE'S THE SIZZLE
OF FLESH AS HIS
HANDS GRAB THE
SCORCHING BARREL.

THE PUTRID-SWEET
REEK OF PUS AS
BLISTERS ERUPT,
LOOSE AND WET.

THEY'LL SEE.
I'LL MAKE
THEM SEE--



--AN HONEST
CITIZEN COMING
FORWARD--



EVIDENCE OF A
HEINOUS CRIME--

HYPERACUTE SENSES
RUN THEIR GAMUT ON
THE CHARRED WOOD
IN HIS HANDS.

WHAT THERE WAS OF
MYSELF AND AN IN-
NOCENT CAB DRIVER
NAMED JOHN GOLD IS
GONE NOW.



AND WHAT THERE WAS
OF A MAN NAMED WILSON
FISK, A.K.A. THE
KINGPIN OF CRIME...

...THAT'S GONE
NOW, TOO.

THE WORDS DON'T
COME EASY--

--BUT ULTIMATELY,
THEY *MUST* COME.

LEAVE IT UNSAID, RISK
DWELLING ON THE EVIL
THIS MAN'S DONE--

--THE INJURIES HE'S BROUGHT
DOWN ON MY LIFE, ONTO OTHERS--

--AND THE ROAD TRAVELLED
IS ONE OF BITTERNESS,
OF REVENGE.

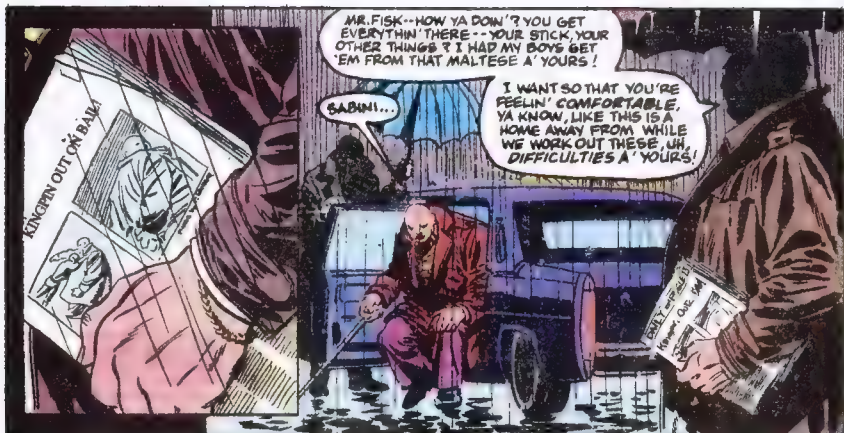
BUT LET GO OF THE HATE,
RISE ABOVE IT, AND MAYBE
THERE'S SOMETHING WORTH-
WHILE THAT CAN PROVIDE
THE INNER DRIVE.

MAYBE THEN THERE'S HOPE
FOR SOMETHING NOBLE.

I FORGIVE
YOU...

THE WORDS DON'T
COME EASY.







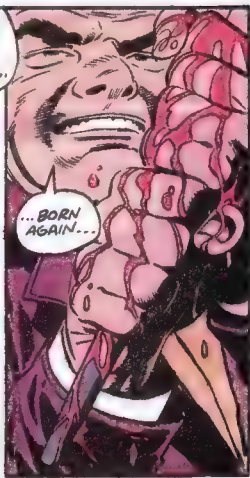
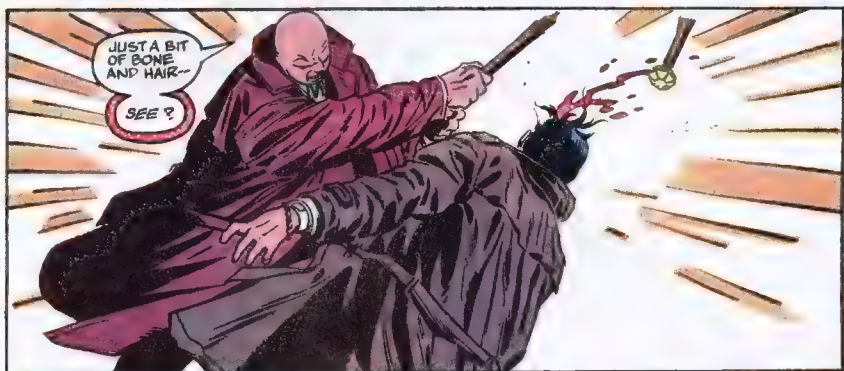
--BUT ONLY SO I CAN HAVE THE PLEASURE A' SEEN' YOU CRAWL, FAT MAN, JUST LIKE YOU MADE ME CRAWL FOR SO LONG!

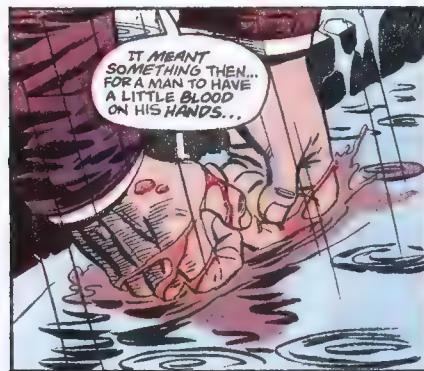
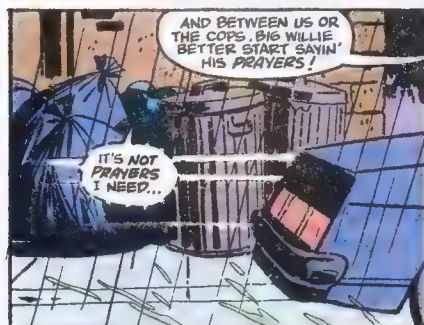
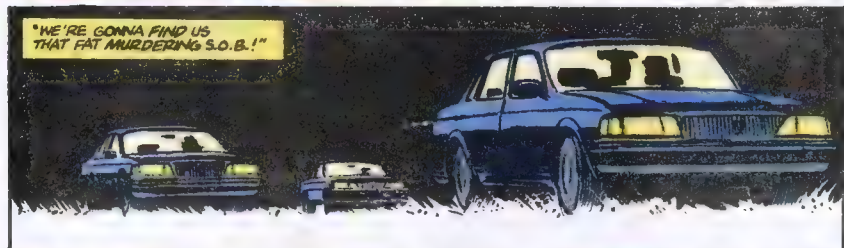
AND WHEN I'VE HAD MY FILL A' MAKIN' YOU EAT CRUD, THERE'S A LONG LIST OF OTHER WISEGUYS WAITING TO BUY THE "OPTION" TO GIVE YOU WHAT FOR!



YOU DON'T LIKE IT, THE TOMBS ARE WAITIN'-- SO'S THE TRIAL, SO'S THE PEN! AND HOW LONG YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA LAST IN THE JOINT, A BIG FLUMP LUSCIOUS THING LIKE YOU?

IT'S ONE THING WHEN YOU'RE ON TOP AND FEARED... IT'S ANOTHER WHEN YOU'RE COMIN' DOWN PAST ALL THOSE YOU SCREENED ON YOUR WAY UP!





"I CAN'T--EVEN IF I GET MY OLD PARTNER TO GO IN WITH ME-- I CAN'T AFFORD THIS!"

"IT'S NOT AS MUCH AS IT LOOKS, MR. MURDOCK. NOT THAT YOU COULD TELL-- NO OFFENSE."

A LOWLIFE NARCOTRAFFICKER LEASED THE PLACE-- PAID THROUGH FOR THE NEXT COUPLA YEARS. RIGHT BEFORE WE BUSTED HIM!

AND UNCLE SAM TOOK POSSESSION...

BUT WHATT! WE NEED IT FOR, HMMM? ENOUGH EMPTY OFFICE SPACE IN THIS CITY AS IS!

CROSSTOWN AT FISK PLAZA, FOR EXAMPLE-- THE KINGPIN'S GONE LOW, BUT I'VE GOT MY INDICTMENT ON RACKETEERING... AND THERE MAY EVEN BE A MURDER CHARGE BREWING!

I OWE YOUR FRIEND WITH THE HORNS FOR HIS HELP IN ALL THAT, AND I PAY MY DEBTS-- AND THEN SOME!

YOU WANT TO SUBLET HERE AT A SUBSTANTIAL DISCOUNT, IT'S YOURS! AND YOU'RE GONNA NEED NEW DIGS TO MAKE GOOD USE OF YOUR WALL DECORATION

BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Matthew M. Mur

THERE WAS GLASS IN THE FRAME, YOUR PAL NELSON SAID YOU LIKE IT WITHOUT.

JUST... ONE OF THOSE THINGS. WHAT-- WHAT IS--?

YOUR LAW LICENSE, MR. MURDOCK.

DOES... DOES THIS MEAN...?

CONSIDER FISK'S SCREW JOB UNSCREWED. I'VE GOT A COUPLA MORE DETAILS TO WORK OUT...

BUT AS OF THIS TIME TOMORROW, YOU CAN CONSIDER YOURSELF BACK IN BUSINESS--COUNSELOR!

HYPERACUTE HEARING FAILS ME.
MY "THANK YOU" TO D.A. MALPER
BARELY AUDIBLE--

--SENSES INSTEAD FOCUSED
ON TOUCH, THE RAISED LETTERS
STILL "READING" BENEATH
MY FINGERS.

"BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE
STATE OF NEW YORK"--I'M
A LAWYER AGAIN.

GOD IN HEAVEN,
I'M A LAWYER.

BUT THERE'S
MORE THAN ONE
SENSORY PER-
CEPTION AT WORK
HERE.

STREET SOUNDS ECHOING
THEIR WAY INTO AN OFFICE
HIGH ABOVE THE CITY, A ROOM
HAUNTINGLY LIKE ANOTHER.

AN OFFICE MASKED IN
THICK BLINDS, THE HEAVY
SLATS SENDING A PATTERN
OF WARM-COLD LIGHT-
DARK OVER MY BODY.

I TRY TO BLOCK OUT
THE OMINOUS FEELING
OF DEJA VU, BUT IF I
DON'T WANT TO ADMIT
THINGS FOR WHAT
THEY ARE...

...HE'S HERE TO
MAKE IT ALL
CLEAR TO ME.

CONDEMNING.

ACCUSING.

I SEE HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME.
IN MY MIND'S EYE ONLY, IT'S
TRUE, BUT IT'S NO LESS
POWERFUL A VISION.

HIS EYES
BURN THEIR
WAY INTO ME.

"THE KING IS DEAD."
THEY PROCLAIM.
"LONG LIVE THE KING."

I WANT TO TURN
MY FACE AWAY TO
ESCAPE THIS BLAME.

A HUNDRED LEGAL
ARGUMENTS COME
TO MY DEFENSE,
SEEKING TO REDUCE
MY CULPABILITY,
TO ABSOLVE MY GUILT.

THEY MAKE THEIR
CASE. "IT WAS
HYDRA." IT WAS
RISK-- HIS PHOBIA,
HIS EGO!-- IT WAS--

I DISMISS
THEIR
EVIDENCE.

HIDING BEHIND THE
SPECIFICS OF HIS
COLLAPSE DOESN'T
CHANGE THE FACT
IT WAS ONE MAN
SET THINGS IN MOTION
--AND KEPT THEM
MOVING.

IN THE END,
THAT ONE MAN
WAS AT THE
CENTER OF
IT ALL. IN THE
END, THAT
MAN WAS ME.

I PRESIDE OVER THIS COURT.

I JUDGE
MYSELF.

THERE WAS A MAN IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
WHO CALLED HIMSELF THE KINGPIN OF CRIME--

THERE'S ENOUGH WRONG IN
THIS CITY THAT THERE'LL
ALWAYS BE SOMEONE
LIKE HIM--

--AND BY HIS UTTER CONTEMPT FOR THE
LAW, BECAME A SYMBOL THAT JUSTIFIED
AWARECE AND VIOLENCE TO EVERY MAN AND
WOMAN IN THE FIVE BOROUGHS.

--BUT THERE'S ALSO ENOUGH
GOOD IN ITS PEOPLE THAT
THEY DIDN'T NEED AN UN-
SHAKEABLE GRAVEN IMAGE
TO SIN DOMINATING THEIR
BETTER HALVES.

THEY NEED SOMEONE TO REDEEM
AND PROTECT THAT PROMISE
OF GOOD IN EVERY ONE.

THEY CAN'T HEAR
ME BUT I WHIS-
PER A VOW TO
EACH OF THEM.

I WON'T LET YOU DOWN...

THE END.

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes!

His name was Vincent Colletta, but everyone called him Vinnie. He started working for Marvel more than thirty years ago, before we were even known as Marvel. I believe we were called Atlas Publishing then. But the company name doesn't matter. What does matter is telling you what a great guy Vinnie was.

Hardly anyone except me knows this, because hardly anyone else was around at that time, but the first stories that Vinnie drew for us were romance strips. When I say "drew," I mean he did both the penciling and the inking, and he did them superbly. Now, I'm not talking ordinary, run-of-the-mill comic book romance strips. I'm talking about

some of the most breathtakingly beautiful pen-and-ink illustrations you've ever seen! Vinnie treated each and every panel as if it were intended for The Louvre. I used to tell him he was putting too much work into each strip, that it wasn't necessary to make everything so lyrical, so pleasing to the eye, so incredibly perfect. After all, we were just printing 10-cent comic books. (10 cents! That'll give you an idea how long ago it was!)

But Vinnie couldn't help himself. He was a born perfectionist. If a drawing wasn't to his liking, he'd do it over and over again until he was satisfied. In the most literal sense of the word, Vincent Colletta was a truly dedicated artist.

Years later, after the romance had run its course, Vinnie offered to put his skill to use by inking our other strips,

mainly super hero thrillers. For the next few decades, his speed, his dependability, his total professionalism, saved our deadlines and our schedules more times than I can ever tell.

The bullpen and I recently learned of Vinnie's passing. We'll always regret that we never had the chance to bid him goodbye. But I want to take this opportunity to offer our most heartfelt condolences to his wife and family. Vinnie Colletta was a uniquely talented, charismatic artist who was always there when we needed him and who never gave less than his best. He was a credit to our industry. He was my friend. I miss ya, VC. So do we all.

Excellsiort!



Stan Lee

Try to remember, the kind of November... oops, wrong month. Now we'll have to think up a new opening. Okay, so this is the month where we all chow down on turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and giblets (what the heck are giblets, anyway?), eating more food in one day than we do the whole rest of the year. Then we give thanks that we only have to eat cranberry sauce once a year, and Mom puts the whole thing in the freezer for a month so we can eat the same dinner again at Christmas.

Here at Mighty Marvel, we have a lot to be thankful for this year. For starters, our head honcho (and head hipster) **Terry Stewart** initiated our first ever company picnic this past August. The picnic was a huge success, with plenty of food and drink for all, and fun and games galore (with fewer casualties than we would've expected). Among the activities were softball, football, and volleyball (Marveloids will play any sport that ends in the word "ball"), with the highlight of the day being an impromptu wet t-shirt contest! Everyone is looking forward to next year's picnic, especially Ant-Man, who said he plans on bringing lots of friends next time!

The Marvel softball team also had a lot to be thankful for this year. (Actually, there were TWO Marvel softball teams this year — so many people wanted to play that it was necessary to form two teams: the Punishers and the Hellraisers. But then the two teams merged about halfway through the season.) Both teams had largely unimpressive track records, but the season ended on a high note with a victory over arch-rival, the DC Bullets. DC had won the first two games against Marvel this year, so it was a particularly satisfying victory for our side as we crushed them in a devastating 8-0 shut out.

Team captains this year were neo-hipster **Paul Becton**, and hipster-wanna-be **Evan Skolnick**. Noted the easily-bruisable **Evan**, "This was the first game of the season in which I did not bleed." MVP's for the final DC game were **Fabian Nieceza** (who thinks it's square to be hip), ex-hipster **Craig Kunaschk** of the direct sales department; who pounded out a three-run homer, and assistant editor **John Lewandowski**, who was a hipster when being a hipster wasn't considered hip.

After the game, assistant editor (and intercontinental-hipster) **Richard Ashford** and his lovely wife **Carol Baird** (who's so hip she's got a different last name from her husband)

NOVEMBER
COOLOMETER

- THE ADDAMS FAMILY
- BORIS YELTZEN
- SCORSESE/DENIRO MOVIES
- THE FANTASTIC FOUR
- COMEDY CENTRAL
- PETER BAGGIE'S HATE
- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS
- MIKHAIL GORBACHEV
- CAPTAIN AMERICA: LA PELICULA
- IMAGE SEMINARS
- THE DISCONTINUATION OF FOAM PACKAGING BY McDONALDS
- SPIDER-MAN
- BALLOON IN MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE
- THE LETTER "L"
- TAKATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION
- AMANDA PAYS
- AWARDS SHOWS
- SEMIPERMEABLE MEMBRANES
- NUTRASWEET
- ABC SITCOMS, ESPECIALLY "WHO'S THE BOSS"
- THE OCTOBER COOLOMETER
- SELF-REFERENTIALISM
- NUISANCE SUITS
- MACAULEY CULKIN
- COMMUNISM
- THE NEW YORK SUBWAY SYSTEM

threw a party at their digs in New York's Upper West Side. Players from the Marvel and DC teams showed up, and a good time was had by all. Truly it can be said that everyone came away a winner on that day (of course, the Marvel team were the real winners, and the DC team went crying home to their mothers! So there!).

The kids of the St. Mary's recreational center in the South Bronx also have a lot to be thankful for this year — their building now sports a huge mural, filled with Marvel characters, painted by residents of the community. The mural was part of a project which takes kids off the streets and gives them a creative outlet. **Bob Budiansky**, who is a hipster from way back, helped the kids out on the project, ably assisted by demi-hipster (and everybody's sweetheart) **David Wohl**, whose return to staff was brutally ignored by this page several months back. Also assisting in this project was DEATHLOK artist and ultra-hipster **Denys DeWath**.

There are some thankful new fathers in the Marvel family these days — suspected hipster, GHOST RIDER writer **Howard Mackie** with his lovely wife **Deborah Highley**, just brought forth into this world a baby girl named **Alexandra**. Triple-threat SPIDER-MAN hipster **Todd McFarlane** and his fabulous wife **Wanda Kolomyjek** just joined forces to produce a baby girl named **Cyan**. And mega-hipster slash inker **Mark McKenna** and his vivacious wife **Kathy** produced their latest creative endeavor — a little bundle of joy named **Erin Marie**. All of these babies arrived on schedule, which means they have absolutely no future in this business!

One guy who is not too thankful this year is MARVEL AGE assistant editor **Mike Lackey**, who wouldn't know a hipster if one came up and bit him on the nose. Mike is famous for having the smallest desk at Marvel. Well, recently Mike moved downstairs to the ninth floor when MARVEL AGE received a new editor, cowgirl/hipster **Renée Witterstaetter**. With the move came an even smaller desk for Mike! At this rate, we may just take Mike's desk away, and he can put a board on his lap and use that! Look at the bright side, Mike — at least you're not sitting on milk crates!

Be here next month for more hyper-hip pronouncements and foolerah. You know what they say, "When the going gets hip, the hip get hopping!"